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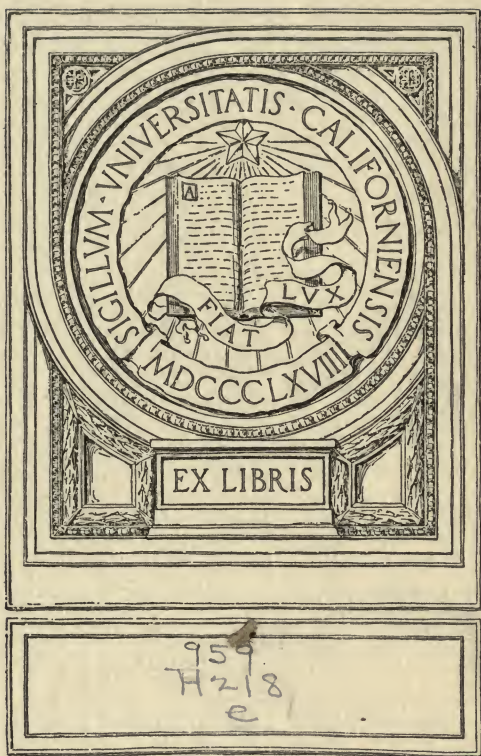
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Escape and Fantasy

George
Rostrevor

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**ESCAPE
AND FANTASY**



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ESCAPE AND FANTASY

Poems

BY

GEORGE ROSTREVOR *Hamilton*

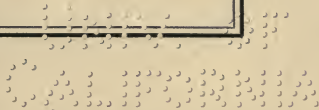


New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1919

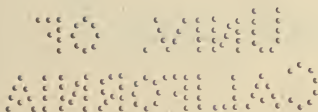
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TO
MARION

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE CHANGE	9
ORPHEUS	11
THE RIVER	16
MOMENTS	17
THOUGHTS	19
TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS	20
THE VOICE (AN ECSTASY)	23
SPRING RAIN IN LONDON	35
LOTUS EATERS	36
THE GREY BIRD	37
ELYSIUM	40
ETERNITY	41
THE SEA-MAID	43
THE CELL	47
THE ASCETICS	48
CONSPIRACIES	50
A RHYME OF FAITH	52
THE SHINING POND	53
THE HAUNTED STREET	56



THE CHANGE

ALL the daytime I belong
To the solemn-coated throng
Who with grave, stupendous looks
Study cash and ledger books,
Or who go,
Staid and slow,
On sad business to and fro.

But when twilight comes, I range
Over topics new and strange,
Wasting all my leisure hours
On fay birds and phantom flowers,
Or I sing
Some mad fling
Through the impish evening.

Yes, and when the moon goes by
Rocking in a foamy sky,

THE CHANGE

Then I swear I'm more akin
To the laughing Cherubin
Than to those grave men who go,
To and fro, to and fro,
On sad business to and fro.

ORPHEUS

HUSH, thou noisy nightingale,
Let thy sorrowful song be mute.
Orpheus, with his lute,
Sings to the vale.

Weather-smitten, travel-worn,
Fever-eyed and frail is he,
Orpheus, Orpheus, the forlorn
Of Eurydice.

Trembling like a crazy shadow
When a gust is in the trees,
Phantom-like he flees
Over mere and meadow.

Twinkle on the lute his fingers.
Hark! a ghostly music swings,
Echoes, falls, echoes, lingers,
Orpheus sings:—

ORPHEUS

To-day, to-morrow,
There is sorrow,
But when Night,
Holy Night,
Putteth on
Her sober gown,
Then is there delight.

Take thy fill
Of rest, rest,
O separate will, —
Wayward, wayward, wayward will
Of each wild creature, take thy rest
Lulled on the breast
Of the cool dark hill.

Very deep,
O baffled will,
Be thy sleep
On the sombre hill.
But heart of the world, awake, awake,
For Orpheus' sake!

ORPHEUS

Hungry lion, do not howl!
Supple tiger tawny-barred,
Chattering monkey, chequered snake,
Privy wolf and spotted pard,
Creatures that do use to prowl
Through the forest, let you lie, —
Not a sound, not a cry, —
Soothèd by my lullaby.

Cease, unquiet owl, to moan,
Folded keep thy stealthy wings;
Nightjar, stay thy monotone,
Listen, listen, Orpheus sings.
Shut you every wakeful eye
Soothèd by my lullaby.

Very deep
Be thy sleep,
Cruel, cruel, cruel will,
Very deep
Be thy sleep
On the sombre hill.

ORPHEUS

But, O heart, awake, awake,
Wake and leap for Orpheus' sake!
Heart of all the world, awake
For Orpheus' sake!

Cloudy waters of the sky
Flow no longer; listening stars
Stop their silver-wheelèd cars,
Conquered by my lullaby.
Each one, smitten by my spell,
Holds him like a sentinel.

Beauty on the brow of Night
So complete is that despair,
Gazing like a statue there,
Changes to a grave delight.
Never hath the swart Night been
So unparalleled a queen.

Very deep
Is thy sleep,
Wayward, wayward, wayward will,

ORPHEUS

Very deep
Is thy sleep
On the sombre hill.
But the heart, the heart is awake,
Beating high for Orpheus' sake,
Everywhere awake, awake,
For Orpheus' sake.

THE RIVER

WHY, O River, on thy breast,
Why do the trees so sweetly rest?

Why so royal does the black barge sail
On thy water smooth and pale?

Why does the rough-tongued river-man sing
Like a minstrel to a king?

Why, O quiet River, do I
See in thee so clear a sky?

MOMENTS

I'VE seen the rich dark earth fling up
Cuckoo-flower and buttercup,
I've heard the meadows burst with song
Of thrush and blackbird all day long,
I've seen the burning sun go by
With a pomp of cloud in the roofless sky,
I've heard the wind whistle and shout
And toss the tallest oaks about,
I've seen, I've heard the flash and the call
Of the distant thundering waterfall . . .

My soul turns back to me again
At twilight. All the day like rain
It has scattered itself in drops and flashes
And moments of colour, and sudden splashes,
Has flown and mixed with the single notes
Quick-pouring from the song-birds' throats,
Losing itself and multiplying,
Living a thousand lives and dying.

MOMENTS

My busy eyes at the fall of day
I close: I shut the world away.
Now no star may pierce the gloom
Of my fragile-curtained room,
But flowers more wonderful and trees more
tall
Bloom in the dark there; sweet dewes fall;
Silence cries with the ghost of sound;
Flashes of colour and tune are found
Linked in one. I hear, I hear
The voice of Spring cry out to me there,
And the voice of Spring is the voice of Love
Crying below, around, above,
While — in the dark of my body — his eyes
Burn more deep than star-flushed skies.

THOUGHTS

IF in a giant brain
The thoughts of the world could lie,
How darkly would each cell be lit,
What phantoms pale would people it,
Flocking, flocking by:
Thoughts of things that jerk or leap,
Things that flit in the sky or creep
In the atomy dust, or swarm in the deep,
Leviathan or fly!

Fugitive, feeble, vain —
The giant would fall asleep,
And they in millions would be gone
For ever to oblivion,
Far down deep:
Thought of toad and thought of lark,
Crab and crocodile and shark,
Armadillo, aard-vark,
Terrapin and sheep.

TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS

. . . *and Tidal, king of nations --*

GENESIS xiv

TIDAL, King of Nations,
Sent a proclamation forth
To the tribes of the South
And the clans of the North;

His word flew and travelled
Quick as a gathering flame,
The far-off people shook
At the rumour of his name.

Tidal, King of Nations,
Thy name is for thee,
Shadowy and vast,
An immortality.

* * *

TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS

Tidal, King of Nations —
Lo, at the sound
Terrible armies leap
Crying from the ground.

High in the midst, on
A white throne is He,
Set as a firm rock
In the surge of the sea.

Clear as the moon his brow is,
But in his secret eyes
Shadow within shadow dark
The future lies.

In his hand glitters
The phantom of a sword;
The warring peoples cry
And hail him for lord:

But within his dark eyes
Where future time grows
Are gentleness, mercy,
Peace and repose.

TIDAL, KING OF NATIONS

The nations bow and tremble,
They do not understand,
They only see the gleam
Of the wrath in his hand.

* * *

Tidal, King of Nations,
Thy name is for thee, --
Oh, far-off brotherhood! --
An immortality.

THE VOICE

(AN ECSTASY)

I

The Prelude

I SAW the regal sun look down
And crown the earth with a golden crown:
I saw his bright embraces fill
The valley and assail the hill;
I saw him kiss the hill I knew
Where matted gorse and heather grew.

I heard a child go whistling by
To school — I heard the ploughmen cry
To their horses — in the yard
A bantam-cock was crowing hard —
A pensive and complacent hen
Began to drawl . . drawl . . . drawl
 and then
A puppy yapping with delight
Chased and hustled her in flight.

THE VOICE

I took me to a tangled lane
Hoping for quietness — in vain;
I only in the world was mute.
The blackbird laughed upon his flute,
And starlings talked in wayward wise
On creaking boughs, and up the skies
The trembling, quick, delirious lark
Sang until my soul was dark.

So morning, noon and all day long
The world was multiplied with song
And I, distracted, could not sing;
At length, toward the evening,
I climbed the little hill I knew
Where matted gorse and heather grew.

Slowly,
Slowly,
Slowly at last the evening fell;
Slowly beneath her drowsy spell
The teeming brain of the world was quieted:
The noise of day was dead.

Now might a single human thought
Flying out, keen-wrought,

THE VOICE

Usurp dominion of the sky, and fill
The void of the world with a chant of love,
and move it to one will.

So from my ingathered soul
Softly sang I to my Love —
Softly, yet I heard the whole
Shining world, beneath, above,
Echo me and ring and ring
Through the quiet evening.

First I sang how she doth dwell
Carven so within my mind
That her tokens I do spell
And her vital beauty find
Paining me, oh everywhere
Phantom-bright upon the air.

Morning winds with liquid tune
Her abounding joy express;
Azure-folded deeps of June
Tell me of her tenderness;
Laughingly the waterbrooks
Mirror her untainted looks.

THE VOICE

Trembling shadows wake in me
Sense of the outflowing tide
Of her hidden rarity,
Till I dream her at my side, —
And her prayed-for kisses rain
Through and through me, sharp with pain.

Hushed the melody I sang,
Earth around me rang and rang.

II

The Ecstasy

Quick a current of delight
Through my body laughed and
leapt,
Took the dazzle from my sight,
From the earth my senses swept;
Through the ringing air I sped,
Loosened as from bars of lead.

And my singing soul became
Infinite; the sea, the sky,
Were my flesh, the mighty frame
Of the Universe was I;
Mystic voices in me stirred,
And I cried, and I heard.

THE VOICE

Crying how my Lady shone
Fairer than the dawn upon
 Snowy-crested Himalay;
How she fed with golden fire
Red lamps of the Earth's desire,
 White lamps of the Milky Way.

Crying how, if she must die,
Sudden from the naked sky
 Star and sun must fade and fall,
And from every naked tree
Foliage drop, and her death be
 Earth's and Heaven's funeral.

So did I her glory sing
Through the quiet evening.
Every note and echo fell
Crystal as a chiming bell,
Strong and singular of beat,
Gay and simple, clear and sweet,
Gentle, yet with even sound
Calling to the southern bound
Of the world, and crying forth
Undiminished to the north.

And in those harmonious skies
All tempestuous energies

THE VOICE

To such equipoise were wrought
Never a jarring atom fought.
There was neither jolt nor strain,
Shock, nor weight, nor clash, nor pain,
But I saw great Saturn float
Buoyant as a wandering mote
On a sunbeam, or like down
Of thistle indolently blown.

And I felt the deepening night
Saturated so with light
That the very darkness seemed
Light that more intensely dreamed;
And the light was filled with sense
Of Being and Omnipotence, —
Gathered now at instant will
To a single point, until
I was conscious of each bird,
Beast or creeping thing that stirred
In a lane or covert. Then
Consciousness would flow again
Evenly, and life would be
From all separation free:

THE VOICE

Only my Belovèd shone, —
She and I, complete, alone.

And looking down with happy eyes
From my kingdom of the skies,
I saw my lady stoop and give
Glorious life for the world to live.

I saw how from the lullèd earth
 Meeting her gaze the darkness fell
And light celestial sprang to birth,
 And flowers changed the path of hell;
And to her lips she lifted up
 Th' essential world, created new,
And drank and drained the sacred cup
 As sunfire drinks the morning dew.

From meadows of the noble dead,
 From fields where baffled and forlorn
The conqueror lays his uncrowned head,
 The very life of peace was born:

THE VOICE

And in my lady's heart of love
 So soft, so dim that peace was felt
As when dusk enters a deep grove
 Where, all day long, shadows have dwelt.

From lives of sick men, clean with pain,
 She drew a virtue like the rare
Odour of windflowers washed with rain
 Afloat upon the sensitive air;
And sick men felt in their hot room
 The cooling garden-breezes blow,
And heaven pierce the fading gloom
 With javelins of silver snow.

I saw the sere ungarnished tree
 A treasury of green unlock,
And pastures crown the foaming sea,
 And flame enliven the dull rock;
And frozen rivers were unsealed,
 And waters through the desert ran,
And like a meteor shone revealed
 The mystic in the common man;

THE VOICE

Whose soul enchanted, winged with dream
And eyed with splendour, thrust her
course

Rapid upon the darkling stream,
Sped by her own unconscious force, —
Content at last, content to ride
Free from the well-loved daily bond
Of time and place, on the full tide
Of Oceans unexplored beyond.

And there was song from every land,
In every tongue, in every key,
And every tiny lyric spanned
The chasms of infinity:
Yet I the Lover sang alone
To my Belovèd: all the throng
Of praising voices made but one
Hushed undercurrent of my song:

“O thou Belovèd of the Lover, thou,
Health-giver, Purifier, Strengtheners,
Fountain, and spring, and river of the Sun.
O thou Belovèd of the Lover, strong
As morning or the full inflowing tide,

THE VOICE

Calm as the evening sky above a lake.
Thou who art one and changeless, O Belovèd,
O thou Belovèd who art calm and strong.
O calm Belovèd, where all passion lies
Too deep to stir, and strong, O thou Belovèd
In frailty that shatters force. O Love!
Belovèd of the Lover, everlasting,
Beyond all Death, all Change, O Love Belovèd,
Be with the Lover always, calm and strong."

III

The Return

So did I in Heaven sing,
And the lilac evening
Deeper, deeper, deeper shone.
Fairer yet and yet more fair
Burned my kingdom of the air.

So I sang — or *did* I sing?
I, who still was listening.
So I sang — yet *was* it mine,
The Song, the Singing Voice divine?

THE VOICE

Sudden, in a fit of mirth,
I that was so mighty grown
Bent me low to see the Earth
And the little hill I knew
Where the gorse and heather grew.

Then I cried and Heaven cried
Loud with laughter, for I spied
How my puny body lay
In a coat of sombre grey
Six foot long amid the heather
With its two arms locked together,
With its pinpoint eyes that burned
Motionless and solemn turned
In a brave unconscious stare
On the diamonded air.

Still I looked, and in a while
Saw the growing of a smile
On the lips and then a yawn,
Then a difficult breath long-drawn —
One deep breath, and then an arm
Stretched out, and, as if alarm
Seized it, the whole body shook.

THE VOICE

Then could I no longer look,
For I felt my limbs and knew
I was narrowed down again
To my body, and I grew
Quiet, fearing the disdain
Of the stars who looked on me
Fallen from their company.

But I heard no sound of scorn,
Only a far echo borne
Of the Voice whose singing moves
And quickens every thing that loves.

SPRING RAIN IN LONDON

HARDLY awake, I saw in the street
The shining raindrops pelt;
And lulled by their quick monotonous beat
I let my languid eyes half close. I felt

The tinkle of a rivulet
Bubbling lazily down a hill,
Where the turf was a couch for dark violet
And flame-eyed tormentil.

I saw the sun leaping through a cloud —
Apollo shooting at the bladed corn —
And the lark, a dizzy fanatic, hailing loud
The golden god reborn.

LOTUS EATERS

I GREW so quiet as I walked along,
My mind so much a mirror to the wood,
So passively open to the colour and song
And the whole company of solitude

That past time fell from me, and time to
come
No longer drew me with its magnet power:
My whole self lazily to a bee's low hum
Listened, and watched him fumble at a
flower.

The present held me. I was just aware
Of the ripple and stir of muscles where
my hand
Lay slack against my side. I sucked live
air,
And drew sweet moisture from the clayey
sand.

Now do I know how horses live, and cows,
Minute to minute of the shining day,
Solemn with gaze contented as they browse
Finding their lotus in the fields of May.

THE GREY BIRD

THE wind blows
Heavy with spice.
Among macaws and birds of paradise
With plumage grey he goes.

Silence hangs like a cloud;
Yet lives innumerable teem.
The wild eyes of the crowd
Of watching creatures with a sullen gleam
The forest haunt.
The birds flaunt
Their vivid hues, and scream,
Yet leave the smothering silence still supreme.

And the bird with the grey wing
Unnoticed flies. No finery or glow
Has he to show,
Nor in this land unhallowed will he sing.

THE GREY BIRD

But in the tropic heat,
When March is ablaze,
Strange instincts beat
In his breast.
He is full of amaze,
He suffers a sweet unrest,
And though
Unheeded still he flutter to and fro,
Yet in foreknowledge of a gentle Spring
He turns and fondles oft in his warm throat
The pure, the lovely note
He soon shall sing —
When, in a land of the West,
In England, over the foam,
After long voyage his tired wings come to
rest
And his glad heart finds home.

Then hark how he shall spill
His liquid miracle,
Hark to the thrill
Of the secret song,
The gay tune hid so long!
See on a twig scarce bent,
Mid leafage cool
Of oak or birch

THE GREY BIRD

Or willow-fringe about a reedy pool,
How he shall choose his perch
And make wild music out of souls content.
How he shall love!
How he shall sing!
How he shall rove
With a careless wing!
How in this Isle
Of Splendid Voice,
Home from exile
He shall rejoice!
How his golden song shall be spent
Forgetting the foul, fierce continent!

ELYSIUM

HUSHED their feet fall
On the dewy grass:
In robe rhythmical
Shining they pass:

Lovers who for bliss
Grave and rare and deep
Need no clasp, or kiss,
Or lovers' sleep.

ETERNITY

MEN who are wise in secret lore
Well argue and avow
That fugitive Time shall be no more —
No change, no after, no before,
But one eternal Now.

Yet I will dream Eternity
Only a nobler Time,
Where all the past shall gathered be
And hours all of memory
In each new hour chime:

Triumphing easily over Death;
Showing the sign of power
Of one who goes with even breath,
Who hurrieth not nor lingereth,
Harmonious with his hour:

ETERNITY

A march, full-speed, from thought to
thought,
A music more sublime
Than holy poet ever caught
From magic choirs, and tuned and wrought
In miracle of rhyme.

THE SEA-MAID

I HEARD an immortal, under the sea,
Singing the beauty of change and death.
Oh lovelier than light was she,
And Araby was in her breath.

She lay in a hollow of stainless air
Roofed and walled with a crystal gleam;
No light wind stirred to quiver her hair
Or loose from her eyes the banded dream.

Her voice was the piping voice of a child,
Shrill, pathetic. I do not know
Whether I wept or whether I smiled
To hear her chant of curious woe.

The sea-maid sang,
"Never shall I die.
The evil eye,
The spine, the fang
[43]

THE SEA-MAID

Have not any power, —
No spell, no charm
May wither or harm
My beauty's flower.

For, I suppose,
I am fair, more fair
Than any rose
Or earth-bloom rare,

Or maid of the earth,
Or, faint and far,
Heaven's dark birth
Of a radiant star.

And yet they are crowned
With a joy not mine,
With a light divine
Who have found, have found

The secret of change, —
They are born, they grow,
They are dark, they glow,
They are new, wild, strange.

THE SEA-MAID

But I remain
Immortal, I
Who am fain, oh fain
To change or die.

* * *

Once was a time
I found the wreck
Of a ship sublime
With a masted deck:

I peeped through the hull
And what should it hold
But shimmering gold
And a shining skull

And broken glass
And twisted steel,
And a steering-wheel
Of oak and brass.

I loved them and watched them day by day,
I watched their beautiful slow decay.
I watched them soften and break and rust,
And thicken with weeds and fall to dust.

'THE SEA-MAID

But when they were crumbled quite, there
came

The fish that are centuries-through the same,
Their lifted lids that ought to be wise
Arching high over vacant eyes.

With gaping mouth and sloping chin,
And face fixed hard in a solemn grin,
They softly murmured, *The passing hour*
Over our beauty has no power.

I turned. I looked in my crystal glass.
My splendour was bright as ever it was.
And I wept, and I weep, that I should re-
main
Immortal, unchanging, without a stain."

THE CELL

WHEN from the hush of this cool wood
I go, Lord, to the noisy mart,
Give me among the multitude,
I pray, a lonely heart.

Yea, build in me a secret cell
Where quietness shall be a song:
In that green solitude I'll dwell.
And praise Thee all day long.

THE ASCETICS

AGES long the hills have stood
A solitary brotherhood,
Ages long with sinews bare
They have shouldered the keen air,
They have wrestled with the skies
Hiddenly for a dark prize.

Merry Spring with her wanton train
Tiptoes, tiptoes by in vain;
Ye, O hills, never behold
Her brave dust of green and gold
Flashing by, the pride, the mirth,
The myriad fluttering of the earth.

This wild magic ye have lost —
Tell me, at so bitter cost,
What the guerdon ye have won?

THE ASCETICS

“ Speech with the moon, speech with the sun ;
Valiancy to meet unbowed
The challenge of the thundercloud,
And, to quicken us for fresh wars,
Gay communion with the stars.”

CONSPIRACIES

THE valley seemed a single throat
Singing when the blackbird sang,
So true complete and pure his note,
And through so clean an air it rang:
Trees in a golden rapture stood
Unshaken; their dark shadows fell
And lay locked by the river-flood
In level quiet: blackbird's bell
And hollow-shining air and tree
And river made conspiracy
And cast on me a spell.

Deep in my heart the holy stream,
The stream of quietude, was born,
Whose waters wandering clouds of dream
And marvellous idle shapes adorn;

CONSPIRACIES

My breath was like the breath of a child

Asleep, — yet rooted in repose,

Multitudinous swift and wild

My branching, flowering thoughts arose.

So heart, breath, mind, while I spoke no word,

Conspired. Suddenly I heard

My song with the blackbird's close.

A RHYME OF FAITH

SAY ye "Lo the heavens frown,
Soon the thundercloud shall burst,
Towering faith shall be flung down.
We — thank God — expect the worst."

Cowardly blasphemers, hark!
Credo shall my motto be,
Credo — all the sky is dark —
Quia Impossibile.

THE SHINING POND

AGAINST the sky's pale rim
The cottage and the trees stood dim.
But in the glow,
More tense,
Of the little shining pond that lay below,
The darkened outlines were drawn clear,
Sharp to my sense.

And gazing there
My vision became
Empty and passive, no more than a frame
For the silver water that burned and
burned

At last, when I turned,
My soul was a mirror, on whose surface lay
Without a flaw
Each momentary thing I saw, —
Then slipped away.

THE SHINING POND

And I heard
Each faint noise,
Hardly listening.

I heard
The noise of the cockchafers around me, —
Not only the sound
As they boomed in their flight,
Above, in the dim light,
But as they busily stirred
Loosening
Heavy body and horny wing,
Blundering free
Out of the thicket of the may-tree.

I saw the flower look up pale-eyed
From the tangled grass,
And the pale moth climb up, half awake, with
 quivering wing,
And still to the side
Of the sedges cling, —
Then like a ghost through the brown air
 pass.

THE SHINING POND

And nowhere,
Everywhere,
The fall,
Hollow and clear,
Of the cuckoo's sounding call.

And yet so quiet . . . every tree
(But most the poplar tree,
Shooting up
Confidently
To the sky's white cup)
Appeared eternal.

Suddenly, out beyond
The dark, I heard a chime.
It told of eternity, not of time,
It told that the quiet hour was one
With the quiet ages gone,
With the quiet hours to be
Eternally.

Shadow crept over the shining pond.
I fell into a deep
Trance, an illumined sleep.

THE HAUNTED STREET

ONLY the faint-echoing fall of my feet
Sounded in the empty street,
Where noisily an hour or so ago
The townpeople wandered — men, all sorts
and types,
Swinging leisurely to and fro,
Laughing and lounging, pulling at their
pipes;
Big-featured women; boys with caps aslant
To hint them men of the world; slim girls
with scant
White summer dresses that in dubious light
Fluttered and gleamed to the sight
Like pallid moth-wings.

Now the populous street
Was empty: not a phantom lingered there,
Not a ghost of sound on the air
Save, as I passed, for my echoing feet.

The moon was hidden; hardly a candle shone
At any upper window, and the stars
Were dim as candles: from the shops and
bars

THE HAUNTED STREET

The glimmer of light was gone.
A few arc-lamps at intervals threw
Mock moonlight on the mimic waterway
Of the wheel-burnished road;
And the road lay
Cool and rejoicing, lightened of its load
Of travelling life — as a tired face may lie
Smooth of its furrows, the unquiet day
Forgotten, the importunity
Of thought and emotion folded away
And shuttered off by Sleep.

Only my footsteps sounded in the road.

Suddenly I stopped. For I felt a faint light
creep
Up to me and touch me, and lo, behind a
cloud-veil
The harvest Moon gradually climbing the
ascent
To the open firmament!
The vapours like lit foam
Dripped and glittered, as I watched her
battle against the tide,
Then huddled again more close and strove to
hide

THE HAUNTED STREET

Her scattering silver with dull monochrome;
Yet with a final stroke did she prevail,
Unflinching out of the stormy water sail,
Astonish the dark night, and roam
Splendid in triumph on her ocean-home.

And, as I watched, it seemed
My eyes were nothing but hollows filled to
the brim with light,
And my body was unsubstantial, and the
flood unearthly streamed
Through and through me, body and soul,
immovable, absorbed in sight.

Along the sombre rank
Of ordinary houses the lustre spread
Until their level surfaces showed blank
And staring-white, and dead.
No longer now as images of Sleep
Could I feel them, folding away
In recesses deep
The voices and the passing feet of day:
Rather I felt them solid, cold, intense,
Shining on the glass of my moonlit sense

THE HAUNTED STREET

Like naked tombstones. They seemed to me
The only reality:
My conscious being
Was from its centre all
Diverted to its outward wall,
From the thinking and willing soul to the
 touching, seeing,
Receptive surface. I lost
All sense of separation. I was one
With the tomblike stone.
The bar of my humanity I crossed,
Drawn outward as the houses drew more
 near,
Till they and I for body had only a gleam-
 ing wall,
For spirit a vague fear.

The pulse of Time stopped.

There was no sound
Anywhere,
No motion in the street around,
In my soul's eclipse I could not stir.

THE HAUNTED STREET

Yet some hidden impulse suddenly broke the
spell,
For inward, inward, struggling through the
barrier
Of my dumb sense I drove. I smote the silent
bell
At the door of my heart angrily, bidding it
answer me
With a semblance of actual sound. Driven
by the tyranny
Of tangible outward horror into my soul I
fought,
Striving to win the images that dwell
In the quiet inmost rooms of intricate-carven
thought.

There I conjured a vision of summer's ripe
content,
Gold corn in the valley, gold gorse on the
hill,
The gold sun shining, the air full of scent,
The common turf paved with gold tor-
mentil;
The air basking lazily, full of the sound of
bees,
And a slow stream washing the boughs of
trailing willow-trees.

THE HAUNTED STREET

There I found a garden where tall hollyhocks
And double-flowered larkspurs towered
side by side,
Groups of slender columbine and crimson-
hearted phlox,
Old-fashioned lavender and pink and Lon-
don pride:
And in that close and quiet garden did I find
The faces of my dearest friends, intimate
and kind.

But a hurry of other faces like a shadow-
show,
Faces remote and strange, crowded unbidden
before me,
Faces at first I did not know . . .
Yet some of them bore me
Manifest hate or love, — gazing on me
As a familiar friend or enemy.
Gradually I felt the answering passions stir
And days forgotten from a buried past rise;
Gradually
Like objects with pale outlines whitening the
gloom
Of a dark room,

THE HAUNTED STREET

Out of a misty blurr
The faces grew familiar to my eyes.

And yet, as I dimly knew
With a dazed, half-conscious knowing,
These images coming and going, —
These faces old and young
That grew
In a moment, unfolded
And faded, — out of a past that never was
mine were sprung:
Not mine, although they so remoulded me
Under their strong control
That memory seemed to be slowly drawn up
out of my soul
To join them and make them a part
Of my own years,
Linking them to the passions of my heart,
Old hopes and old fears.

In a while shone out
Distinct among them all, beneath a rout
Of dusky hair, one face
Of quick eager impulsive grace;
And memory arose in me till I burned
With a full-kindled fire

THE HAUNTED STREET

Of worship and love, seeing no failure, no
flaw

In her loveliness. . . .

then memory turned,
Memory and the strength of desire,
To hate, fierce hate, hate fiercer for a mem-
ory of shame,

Of a wrong that I had done to her. I saw
With different eyes her beauty and I hated it.
Darkness and agony were in me: I shook: I
bit on my lip; there was dew

Of sweat on my hand, on my forehead; I
knew

My soul no longer was mine but lit with the
flame

Of alien passions, possessing me, driving
me . . .

Empty,

Empty on either side the motionless line
Of tomblike houses gaped upon me —

Their emptiness spoke, they gave me an an-
swer, they told

That only the cold
Bodies of those who slept
Lay in their hold:



THE HAUNTED STREET

The hot unsleeping passions were abroad
Thronging the white road,
Pressing around me, into me. They had
 crept
Deep into me more subtle than sleep;
My soul was strangled: I could not shake
 them off: I struggled in vain . . .

But with a saving throb of pain
The power of motion came to me again,
And down the length of that echoing street
 of dread,
While the beautiful mockery of the white
 moon still looked down
On the sleeping town,
Quick in the stillness I fled.

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